

Positive Behavior at HOME

Calming Kit Stress

What you will find in this kit:

Children respond to stress in many different ways. While we help them navigate through stressful times, we can give them the tools they need to calm their worries on their own. Once we have taught children how to identify their feelings, we can then teach them how to cope with those emotions.

The activities in this kit will help children calm themselves during stressful times.

Here is what you will find inside:

- 4 Activity Cards for Building Skills Together
- 4 Independent Activities allowing children to explore building these skills on their own
- Additional Resources

Building Calming Skills Together Activities:

- Breathing Buddy
- Vision Board
- Color your Feelings
- Sticky Hands

Independent Calming Activities:

- Worry Jar
- Calming Skill Wheel
- Calm the Storm Bottle
- Coping Tool Box

Activity 1

Breathing Activity to Help Your Child be Present

BREATHING BUDDY

When we encourage children to concentrate on the here and now, we give them a tool to lessen stress and worry. This activity helps children channel their stress and worry into a breathing buddy! The breathing buddy is there to help them focus on deep belly breathing, which ultimately reduces their heart rate and brings them back to a calm state.



Instructions:

1. Have your child find their favorite stuffed animal! Something that makes them feel calm and safe.
2. Then, instruct your child to lie flat on their back and hold their stuffed animal on their belly.
3. Tell your child that you are going to count to three and as you do so, they should breathe in deeply through their nose. Encourage them to focus on their belly rising as it fills with air.
4. Then, encourage them to exhale as you count to three again. Did they see their belly slowly shrink? Did the breathing buddy feel it too?
5. Practice this as many times as your child would like, or until they feel their body calm down. Do they feel different? Are they more relaxed?

BUILDING SKILLS TOGETHER

Activity 2

Visualization Activity to Strengthen Positive Emotions

VISION BOARD

Have you ever stopped to think about all of the things that bring your peace in everyday life? Children have a hard time stepping back and remembering all of the things that make them feel good. You can help them! Take the time to create a vision board with your child of all the things that bring them happiness and refer back to that board when they have feelings of worry or stress.



Instructions:

1. Collect different magazines, newspapers, or pictures from the internet. You are also going to need a separate piece of paper, scissors, glue, and something to write with.
2. Explain to your child that there are things they can focus on to help lessen worry and stress. Try to give your child examples of things that calm you or things you think may help them.
3. Then, work together to find images of those things throughout magazines, newspapers, or the internet. Encourage children to try to cut them out on their own. (It could be pictures of animals, toys, nature, or favorite movies.)
4. Once the images have been collected, help your child glue them onto a separate piece of paper.
5. Talk about the vision board and encourage them to look at it when they are feeling upset and need to feel better!

Activity 3

Communication Activity to Help Your Child Identify Emotions

COLORING YOUR FEELINGS

Children of all ages need help identifying and communicating emotions sometimes, especially during difficult and stressful situations. This activity is a great opportunity to identify and label different feelings.



Instructions:

1. Work with your child to create and color different circles. You can either cut out circles from different colored construction paper, or you can cut out the circles from white paper and paint them different colors.
2. Talk about the different colors and what emotions those colors represent. Some examples include: *Blue - Sad *Black - Scared *Red - Angry *Yellow - Happy *Gold - Strong *Green - Worried *Pink - Silly *Orange - Hopeful.
3. Put the circles in a basket so your child can have access to them.
4. Encourage your child to pick out a colored circle each day or when you see them feeling stressed or overwhelmed and communicate how they are feeling. You should participate as well.

Extend the Activity:

- You could use different shapes like a heart
- Have your child wear the color and remind them to change the color throughout the day depending on how they feel

Activity 4

Sensory Activity to Teach Your Child How to Relieve Tension

STICKY HANDS

Did you know that you could use your own body to bring a sense of calm to yourself instantly? This activity allows children to understand that they are in control of what is happening with their body and their feelings. Tensing and relaxing our muscles is one of the easiest ways to help relieve tension from stress!



Instructions:

1. Encourage your child to sit with you on the floor. Talk to them about what it means to tense their muscles!
2. Then, show them that you are going to practice catching all of their worries and squashing them!
3. Show them how to press their hands together tightly. Count to 20 together as you press your hands together.
4. When you are finished counting, show your child how to slowly pull their hands apart. Can they feel the stickiness?
5. Practice this a few times until your child is finished and relaxed.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

WORRY JAR

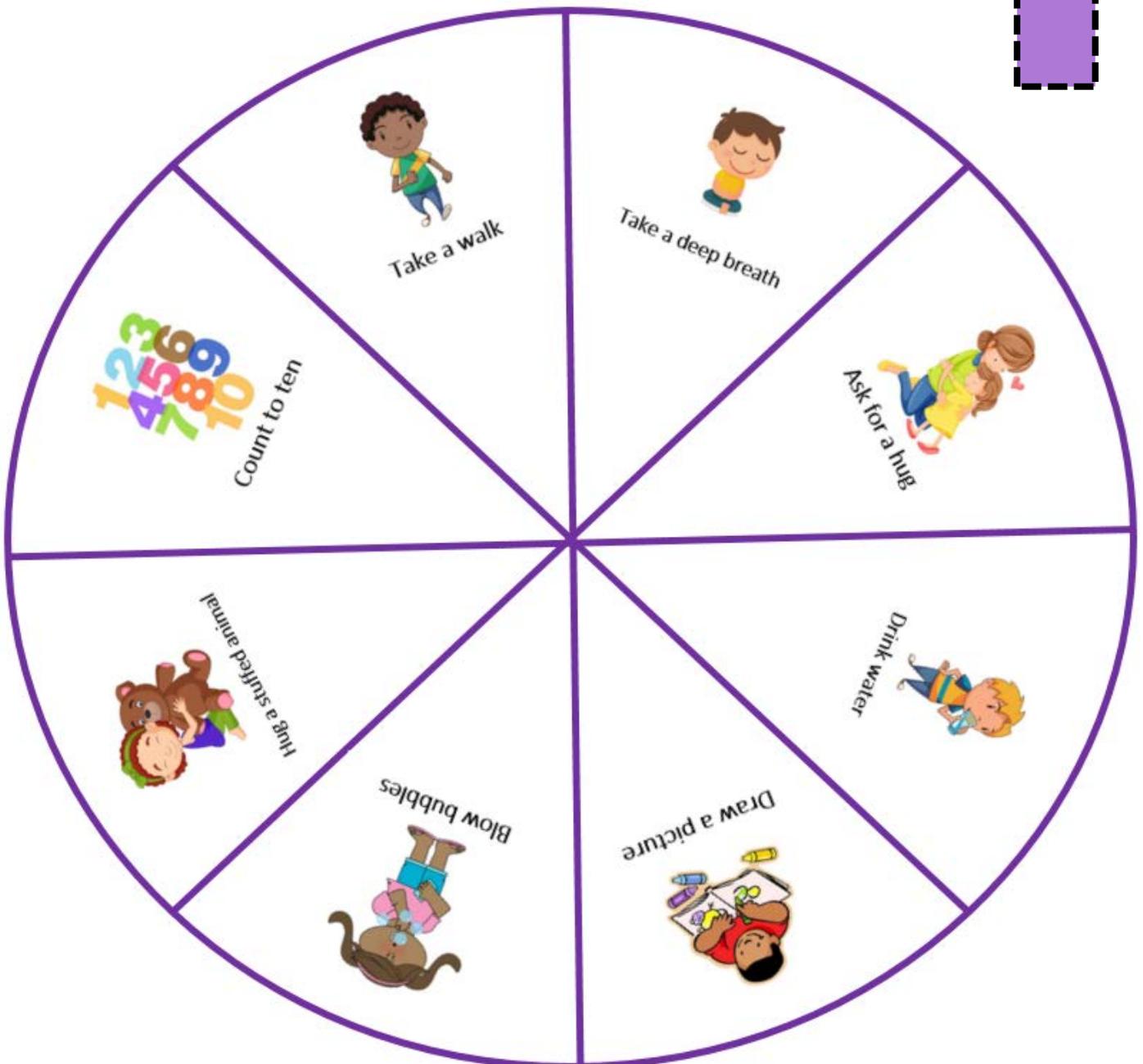
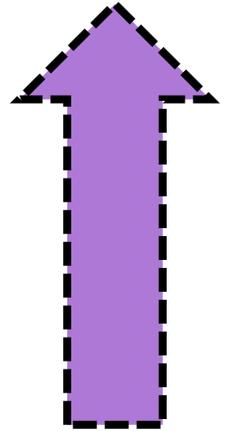
Sometimes we just need a place where we can put our worries. A worry jar is a helpful way to do just that. You can either draw or write your thoughts on a piece of paper and put them in the jar, or you can print this page and use this as your jar.



INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Calming Skill Wheel

Here are 8 ways to help you calm down when you are upset. Cut out the arrow and attach it to the center of the circle. The arrow should be able to spin around the circle freely. When upset, spin the calming wheel and see where your arrow stops. Wherever the arrow lands practice that calming technique with your child.



INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Calming the Storm

Think of this tool as a visual “anchor”, to help children control strong feelings and calm themselves by focusing on the motions happening in the jar. It is important to let your child know it is okay to have strong feelings and there are different ways to calm those feelings. After making the bottle, place it somewhere accessible so your child can shake it when needed.

Materials **needed**:

- Clear plastic jar with tight lid
- Water
- Dish soap
- Teaspoon of vinegar (optional)



Directions:

1. Fill jar with water
2. Add 1 or 2 drops of dish soap to the jar depending on the size
3. Add glitter or food coloring
4. Make sure that the jar lid is tightly on
5. Shake the jar and observe. Watch how the contents swirls, slows down and eventually settles.

(Parent supervision and assistance is needed to create)

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Coping Tool Box

You can include many things in a Coping Tool Box! Find some things around the house to add and introduce the box to your child when they are in a calm state of mind. This allows you to quickly refer them to the box when they are upset.

Some materials include:

Breathing activities to help relax

- Bubbles
- Pinwheels
- Feathers



Something to squeeze to release tension

- Playdough
- Silly putty
- Stress ball



Something visually calming

- Sand timer
- Bubble timer
- Glitter jar



Something that helps identify emotions

- Mirror
- Books
- Toy people



Something soft or comforting

- Pillow
- Blanket
- Small stuffed toy (i.e., animal, doll, etc.)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recommended Websites:

Colorin Colorado

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/search-page?s=Calming>

NAEYC

<https://www.naeyc.org/search/Calming>

U.S. Department of Education

<https://search.usa.gov/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&affiliate=ed.gov&query=Calming>

Zero to Three

<https://www.zerotothree.org/search?q=Calming>

Calming Art Projects

Art is a great way to help the mind relax through different sensory experiences. Art can help you understand yourself, relax, and manage emotions. Try some of these additional activities to help your child feel calm!

- **Finger Painting:** Put some paint on a piece of paper and encourage your child to use their fingers to move the paint around. The feeling of the paint gliding across the paper can help re-focus and ease the mind.
- **Worry Free Collage:** Encourage your child to rip their worries away by tearing, cutting, and shredding different color papers. Then, using those pieces, create a collage on a separate piece of paper using glue.
- **A Journal for My Thoughts:** Create a special journal for you and your child to write notes to each other. This is a safe place where your child can write down their feelings and you can use positive ways to help reassure and calm their fears.
- **Exploring Emotions:** Collect some chalk and head outside to explore emotions! Encourage your children to trace each other's bodies on the sidewalk (or yours if there is only 1 child). Then, have them discuss different emotions and draw the faces on the person! They can even get creative and use different colors to illustrate different emotions.